

THE DAILY PRESS.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14.

[Written for the Cincinnati Daily Press.]

A CONTRAST.

In the cold, in the mud, in the camps all so dreary,
Our soldiers bravely endeavoring to rest;
With the long toilsome marches, foot-sore
And weary,

By a deep sense of loneliness sadly oppressed.

For the love of their country they have left
The home dwelling—

To battle for rights they would fain meet
The foe;

With true patriot zeal their bosoms are swelling,

To see the rebellion and rebels laid low.

Tis for this they are homeless, tis for this
They are battling.

On the dark bloody field they will lie down and die;

Nor flee, though lead bullets like a hail-storm are rattling—

Till the flag of our Union waves proudly over high.

* * * * *

In the White House at Washington I will show you a gathering

In the spacious apartments all blazing with light;

There are women's fair forms resplendent in beauty,

Who charm their admirers till close of the night.

The tables are groaning with rarest viands,

The warm air is loaded with richest perfumes

Of costly exotic—but see, midst the reveling,

Before the gay company a dark picture icons.

O, could ye forget, wives, sisters and mothers,

Your poor weary ones in the cold peeling rain?

Your soldiers, your husbands, your sons and your brothers,

Who have left all they loved, to return not again!

See them wounded, with no loving arm to sustain them;

See them dying away from all they held dear;

And how can ye feast? O, how can ye revel

While groans on the night-wind are borne to your ear!

O, R. L.

The Home Life of a Woman.

"A woman's work is never done," said Mrs. Brown, as she brought a chair from the back of the room against the wall, and offered it to her neighbor, Mr. Jones. In performing this hospitable action, Mrs. Brown called the ghost of a smile to her face, and in the care-worn features could be seen signs of beauty and sweetness that time and trouble were stealing from her. She resumed her seat, and while rocking the cradle, wearily proceeded to pare, quarter and core the apples in the pan beside her, while she discoursed in this wise to the strong, hearty-looking farmer who sat opposite.

"No, John isn't in, Mr. Jones. He's gone to the village to hear about Seesoon—something or other. I can't keep track of him. I'm so hurried and tired. Tugged with fortune and wearied with disaster, as my mother used to say."

"You mean to say you ain't any patriot—don't care what those rascally fire-eaters do any how, I suppose; little did it to you whether Major Anderson holds out or not?" Mr. Jones said this in a wondering, good-natured way.

"Now, look here, neighbor," and into Mrs. Brown's pale cheek a faint crimson crept, and wavered uncertainly, then stationed itself in the acutest place.

"Look here, neighbor, you don't know that hen of ours—that speckled one, that's so famous for raising chickens!"—you know how she worries about 'em, and chucks and scratches, and watches over 'em, and gets poor and frayed like, so she's nothing at last but a bundle of bones and feathers—but the chickens come through all right—fat, and plump and bright-eyed. You know old Mrs.—that's the name John gave her—never minds what she eats, or how heavy the rain falls down upon her, and isn't afraid of anything for the chickens' sake. Well, somehow, I think I am like the poor old hen!"

Mrs. Brown dropped the knife and bent over the candle for a moment. Farmer Jones didn't notice the tears that fell upon the baby's cheek.

"You see, neighbor," the woman went on, "when my heart and hand were full of thoughts and work for John and the children—of how I can manage to save her, and get along without this, and make that last beyond all reason—I don't have much time left to think about these policies, or anything beyond this room we live in. But I used to have thoughts outside of this, about the countries away over the sea, and the woman's eyes had a far-off mournful look in them. 'In geography,' I remember how I liked to learn about sea, and then I thought maybe I'd see all those beautiful things some day; you know girls have their fancies. But I've given all that up. It's not easy to go 'way gathering when I see butts coming out of his stockings and John a mittens needling a patch. I'm afraid you men don't make hardly enough for us, always. We're not so strong as you, and then our work is different. You are out in the fresh air and sunshine, but we stay in the house and don't have much change. You go to market, and haul wool and straw, and meet your neighbors and have a pleasant word with them, and we see the same thing day after day, and get lonesome sometimes, and wonder why we were put into such kind of lives as these."

Then, Mrs. Brown stopped the knife and bent over the candle for a moment. Farmer Jones didn't notice the tears that fell upon the baby's cheek.

"I mean to say that to a woman's nerves, the kind of work she has to do. 'Tain't like plowing, and sowing and driving horses; that's heavy work to be sure, but then you're strong to do it. But we have such particular, careful work. Now, there is bread-making—you don't know how much worry there is about it. You must take so much into the account, the kind of flour, the kind of wood you have to make your fire, the yeast; all those are changing, and you must make allowances for this. You must let the bread rise just so much, and fix the dampers just right, and handle it so carefully. Why, Doctor D— told me that it's just like managing chemicals; and he said men that had to work with chemicals were the most nervous kind, because they were always so full of thoughts and care. Then there's preserves and pickles, and cakes and coffee. You don't know any thing about the care and trouble it is to get them up so nice, when you sit down to eat the light, crisp pastry, and drink the coffee, creamed to the color that suits you. You don't know how tiresome it is to feel so much care always on you, not how much patience and watching it takes, before a turkey is roast 'done to a turn.'"

Mr. Jones looked steadily at his neighbor while she talked. She paused a moment to replenish the fire. He sat in a kind of muse, without offering her any assistance. Finding he did not speak, she continued:

"And so you see, with all these things, I don't think much about what is going on outside, that you and John talk about, though I often wish I could. And I think, somehow, I'm like our old hen; I spoke of, for I don't mind much about myself. I see that I'm getting to sleep more every day, and there are gray hairs on my temples, though I'm not thirty yet. The wrinkles are so plain, too, on my forehead. I'm sorry; John thought I was pretty years ago. I remember how straight and slim I used to be, and had nice brown hair and red cheeks. Dear me! there hasn't been a bit of color in them for years. John is always good and kind, but he don't know how worried I get most every day, and when I speak short and fretful sometimes, he is surprised and says, 'What Mary, is it you speaking?' in such a voice as that?"

Mr. Jones looked up in a wondering sort of way. "Why, I never thought of this before," said he. "I thought woman's work wasn't much any way, but I was wrong. According to your strength, you're the hardest time. We work hard, then as you say, we're stronger, and have more variety; then at evening we rest. I'm glad you spoke so, Mrs. Brown. I'll be more considerate toward the women. I'd advise you to keep a hired girl, only they're such cross vexing things!"

"No, I didn't think so," Mrs. Brown replied. "Hired girls are abused, too. They have the same troubles that I have, almost. No wonder they complain sometimes, who have cause always. We ought to be sorry for them, and remember their troubles. And then, John can't afford to keep a girl; I wouldn't let him. No, there's no way for me but to keep working and worrying till I can't do any more, and then they'll lay me out where it is quiet, and I shall rest. But," and her eyes grew bright, "my children will grow up tall and strong, and if my life goes to nourish theirs, I suppose it is all the same. And yet I sometimes wish my life had been a brighter one."

A rough hand fell on the woman's head, but it might have been a firm, manly voice said:

"Your life shall be a bright one, Mary. God help me make it so."

She turned quickly, exclaiming in her sweet voice—

"John, John!"

ERRORS OF THE PRESS.—"Really," said a printer, in conversing with a literary man about errors of the press, "gentlemen should not place such unmitigated confidence in the eyesight of our hard worked and half blinded reader of proofs; for I am ashamed to say that we utterly ruined one post through a ludicrous misprint!"

"Indeed! and what was the unhappy line?"

"Why, sir, the poet intended to say:

"See the pale martyr in his sheet of fire!"

Instead of which we made him say:

"See the pale martyr in his shift on fire!"

The critics were down force on the poet; but we don't see why. A man "with a shirt on fire" must be a highly poetical object, as his life would be.

See them wounded, with no loving arm to sustain them;

See them dying away from all they held dear;

And how can ye feast? O, how can ye revel

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